



# Ohio's Longitudinal Transition Study

Postsecondary Outcomes for Youth  
Receiving Special Education Services:  
Ohio's Indicator 14 Annual Report 2021



# I. Overview of the Ohio Longitudinal Transition Study

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The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA) requires each state to develop an Annual Performance Report. This report evaluates the state's efforts to implement the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The Annual Performance Report includes annual targets and data for 17 indicators of special education program performance. The Ohio Department of Education (the Department) worked with Ohio's State Advisory Panel for Exceptional Children to establish measurable and rigorous annual performance targets. The report can be accessed at: <http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Special-Education/State-Performance-Plan>.

**View Ohio's Annual Performance Report at: <http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Special-Education/State-Performance-Plan>**

Indicator 14 requires states to report data on post-school outcomes of students who had an individualized education program (IEP) in effect at the time they left school, including individuals who graduated, aged out of K-12 services, or formally dropped out of school. There are three post-school outcome categories defined by federal statute:

**Indicator 14: Post-School Outcomes**

- A. Enrolled in higher education within one year of leaving high school.**
- B. Enrolled in higher education or competitively employed within one year of leaving high school.**
- C. Enrolled in higher education or in some other postsecondary education or training; or competitively employed or in some other employment within one year of leaving high school [20 USC 1416(a)(3)(B)]**

Data for these post-school outcome categories are collected through the Ohio Longitudinal Transition Study (OLTS). The study was designed to collect data about and from students regarding their secondary and post-school experiences and outcomes at the end of their final year in high school and again one year later. The post-school outcome categories are used to measure the engagement of Ohio students with IEPs one year after leaving school as they transition from high school to adult life.

**<http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Special-Education/Special-Education-Data-and-Funding/Ohio-Longitudinal-Transition-Study-OLTS>**

The US Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs has provided guidance and operational definitions for engagement categories (see text box) used by states to inform their data collection for post-school outcomes (i.e., Indicator 14 A-C). The OLTS Exit and Follow-Up Surveys contain questions aligned with these engagement categories which provide the data necessary for determining post-school outcomes (i.e., Indicator 14 A-C). Engagement categories include: (1) enrollment in higher education or training, (2) competitive integrated employment, (3) enrolled in some other postsecondary education or training program, and (4) some other employment. The operational definitions for each category are detailed in the text box.

### **Definitions for Engagement Categories:**

1. Enrolled in higher education means youth that have been enrolled on a full- or part-time basis in a community college (2-year program) or college/university (4- or more year program) for at least one complete term, at any time in the year since leaving high school.

2. Competitive Integrated Employment, as defined in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) 34 §CFR 361.5(c)(9) meaning full- or part-time work where an employee with a disability is: a) making minimum wage or above and is compensated (including benefits) the same as employees without disabilities performing the same or similar work and who have similar experience, training, and skills; b) working in a job found in the community where the individual with a disability interacts, for the purpose of performing the duties of the job position, with other employees within the work unit and at the entire worksite, and, as appropriate for the work performed, with other persons (e.g., customers and vendors) who are not individuals with disabilities (and who are not supervisory personnel or service providers) to the same extent that non-disabled employees interact with these persons; and c) presented with opportunities for advancement that are similar to those available to employees without disabilities in similar positions.

Note 1: For the purpose of defining the rate of compensation for students working on a "part-time basis" under this category, OSEP maintains the standard of 20 hours a week for at least 90 days at any time in the year since leaving high school. This definition applies to military employment.

3. Enrolled in other postsecondary education or training means youth that have been enrolled on a full- or part-time basis for at least 1 complete term at any time in the year since leaving high school in an education or training program (e.g., Job Corps, adult education, workforce development program, vocational technical school which is less than a 2-year program).

4. Some other employment means youth have worked for pay or have been self-employed at any time in the year since leaving high school. This includes working in a family business (e.g., farm, store, fishing, ranching, catering services, etc.).

It is important to understand the relationship between Indicator 14 Post-School Outcomes A-C and the engagement category definitions because the terms are often confused. Indicator 14 requirements regarding post-school outcomes refer to the A, B, C categories described earlier. Post-school outcomes are used for reporting and determining the state's overall post-school engagement rate. Kent State University (KSU) - OLTS personnel review and differentiate survey responses related to each of the four engagement categories and then align responses to the Indicator 14 post-school outcomes requirements (i.e., A, B, and C). It is important to keep these subtle distinctions in mind in reviewing the information in the report and as district representatives collect OLTS data from students. For an Ohio exiter to be considered engaged for reporting purposes, the post-high school activities needed to be aligned with one of the four engagement categories.

## II. Data Collection

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Each year, approximately one-fifth of Ohio's school districts are selected to collect information on their exiting students with IEPs and to follow up with them one year later about their activities since leaving high school. Districts participate in the 2-year process by identifying all students with IEPs exiting school and completing interviews with a sample of students who are willing to participate using the OLTS Exit and Follow-Up Surveys.

KSU-OLTS personnel work with representatives from the Office for Exceptional Children (OEC) and transition consultants with the 16 regional State Support Teams to provide trainings and support districts in data collection. In relation to Indicator 14, school districts receive a rating of "met" or "not met" based on completion of OLTS participation requirements. This rating is applied to the district's Special Education Profile. All school districts are required to complete the exit and follow-up data collection process during a designated time over a six-year cycle.

Results from the OLTS have been used by transition stakeholders for a variety of purposes. OEC uses the results to inform decision making around program management and technical assistance efforts. State Support Team transition consultants advise district representatives in OLTS data collection and usage through reviews of annual, regional, and district reports. These reports provide district representatives with additional information for program evaluation and planning purposes when viewed in consideration with other district and student performance data.

This annual OLTS report provides a description of experiences and engagement of OLTS respondents across the last decade. Characteristics of exiters, such as gender, ethnicity, and disability in relation to planned and actual post-high school employment and education are also discussed. Demographic characteristics and post-school engagement rates for the most recent (2019) respondents is differentiated from the larger OLTS sample. The distinction between the two groups of exiters will be noted by referring to the larger OLTS sample of 11,558 exiters as SAMPLE. Information from the

1,048 respondents in the 2019 exiting cohort is referred to as the COHORT. During data collection and reporting missing data occurs due to the nature of the survey and is not reflected in the results. We used and reported on valid percentages based on complete data for survey responses. Therefore, specific responses to survey items may deviate from the overall number of respondents reported for the SAMPLE and COHORT.

**SAMPLE- aggregated OLTS Exit and Follow-Up data representing 11,558 individuals with IEPs who exited Ohio high schools across 2010 through 2019.**

**COHORT – aggregated OLTS Exit and Follow-Up data representing 1,048 individuals with IEPs who exited Ohio high schools during 2019.**

The majority of respondents were students, but in some instances parents or caregivers responded. Throughout the report, the term exiters is inclusive of respondents who may be parents or caregivers, as well as to represent the different circumstances in which students left school, such as graduating, aged-out from services, or formally dropped out of school.

#### **Exiters**

**Refers to OLTS SAMPLE and COHORT students who have graduated, aged-out from services, or formally dropped out of school. The student or a parent/caregiver acting on their behalf voluntarily provided responses to OLTS Exit and Follow-Up Survey questions.**



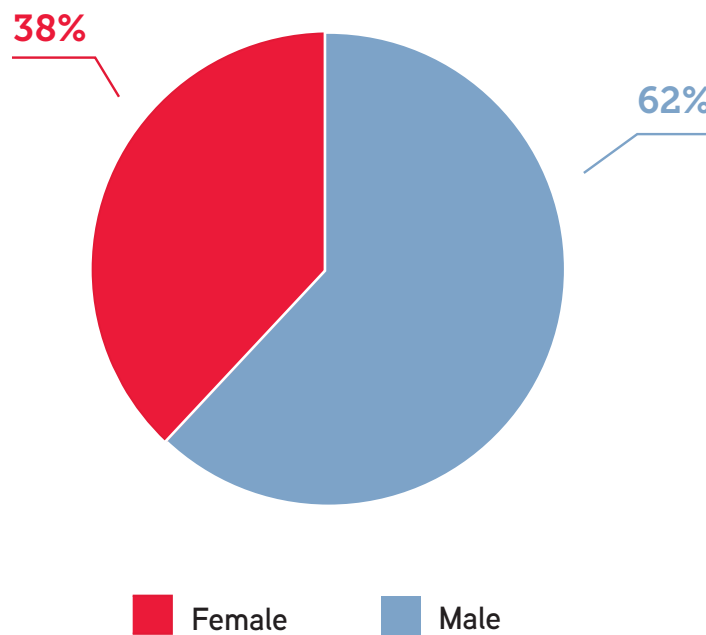
### III. Characteristics and Services for OLTS Exiters

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Figures 1 through 3 provide descriptions of the demographic and educational service characteristics of SAMPLE exiters recorded by district representatives during the student’s final year of high school. These figures reflect the gender, disability, and ethnicity for the 11,558 individuals exiting school during 2010-2019.

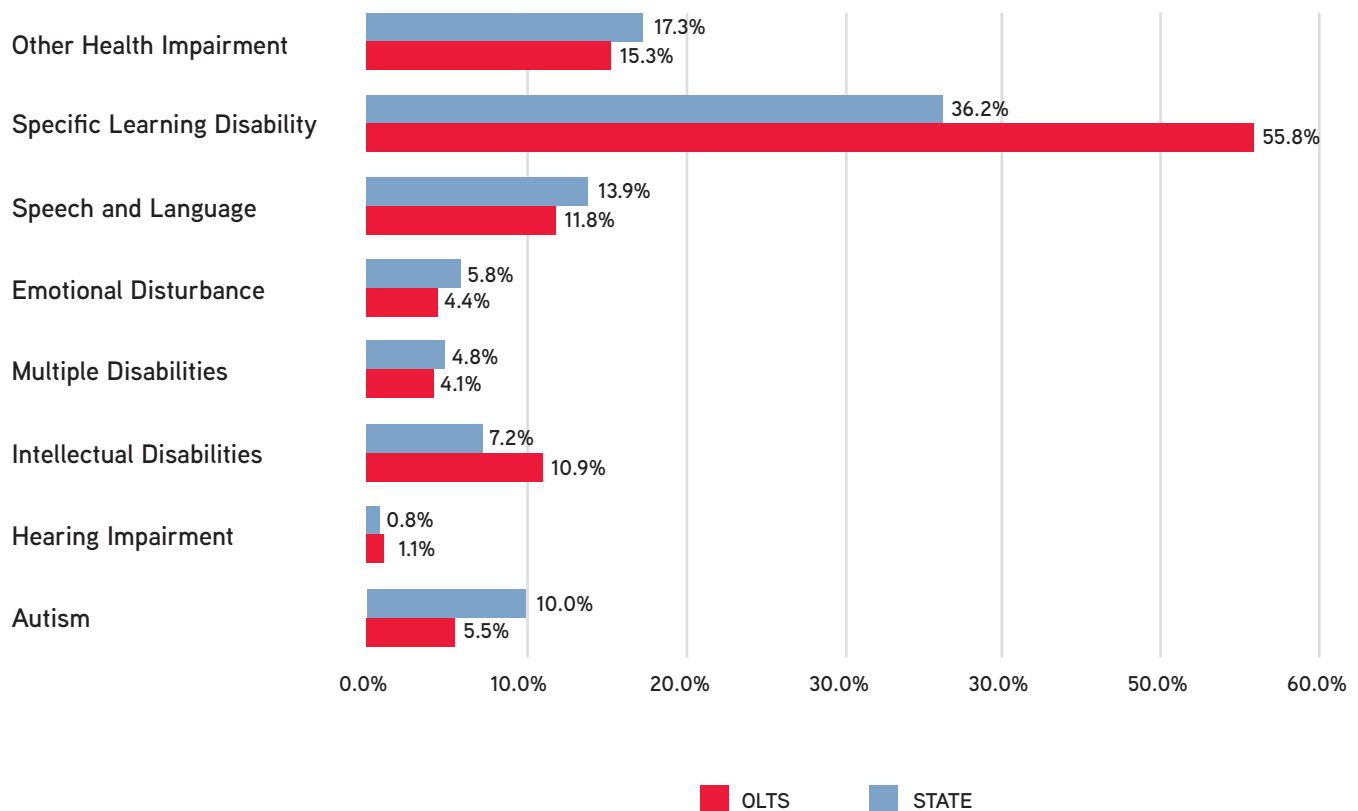
**Gender, Disability, and Ethnicity.** The exiters who identified as female (38%) were underrepresented in the sample with male students being almost two-thirds of the overall respondents.

**Figure 1: OLTS 2010-2019 Exiters: Gender**  
n = 11,558



The majority of OLTS exiters were served under the IDEA disability categories of specific learning disability (SLD; 55.8%) and other health impairment (OHI; 15.3%). When comparing OLTS exiters with the state’s overall special education population across disability categories, Ohio students served under SLD (36.22%) and intellectual disability (17.28%) were overrepresented in the OLTS database. Ohio students with autism (9.96%) were underrepresented in the OLTS database (see Figure 2; ODE, 2021).

**Figure 2: OLTS Exiters 2010-2019 Disability Compared to State Data**



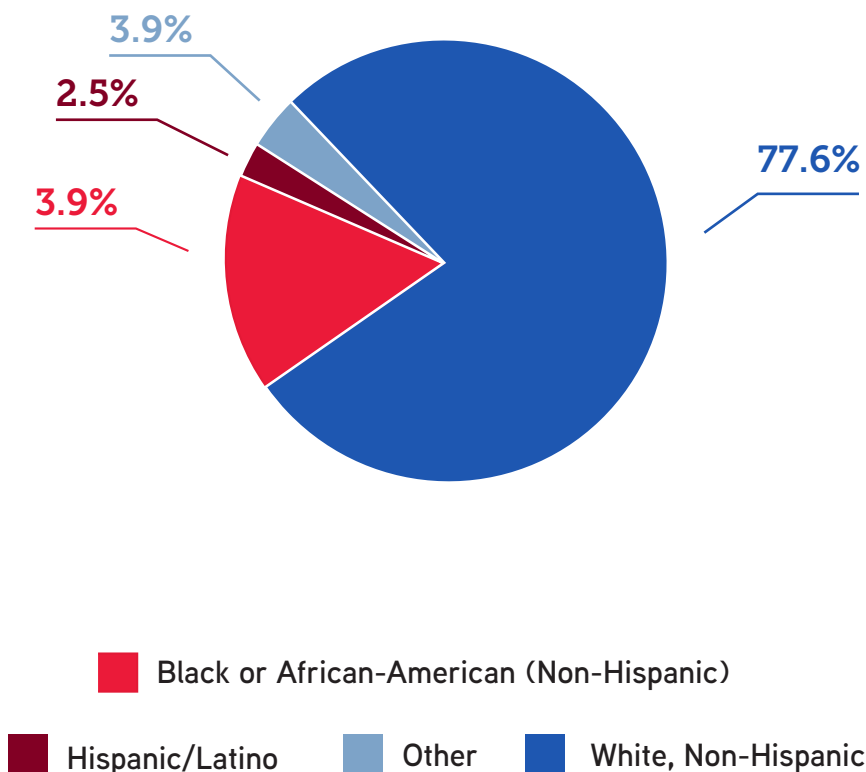
Note 1: Disability categories representing less than 1% of the respondents matched dataset were not included in the chart. For the data that follows, the first percentage represent OLTS exiters and the second represent 2021 data from the State of Ohio (i.e., Traumatic Brain Injury [.8%; .57%], Orthopedic Impairments [.7%;.57%], Visual Impairments [.6%;.35], and Deaf-Blindness [.1%;.03%]).



Figure three suggests, White, non-Hispanic (77.6%) and Black or African American (16.1%) individuals represented the ethnicity of most exiters (93.7%) participating in the OLTS. White, non-Hispanic exiters (77.6%) were overrepresented in the SAMPLE in comparison to state reported ethnicity data for white, non-Hispanic students with disabilities who were 14 years or older (67.1%). In contrast, Black or African American (16.1%) and Hispanic and Latino (2.5%) exiters were underrepresented in the SAMPLE in comparison to students reflected in Ohio's data 20.92% and 5.73%, respectively.

**Figure 3: OLTS Exiters Reported Ethnicity 2010-2019**

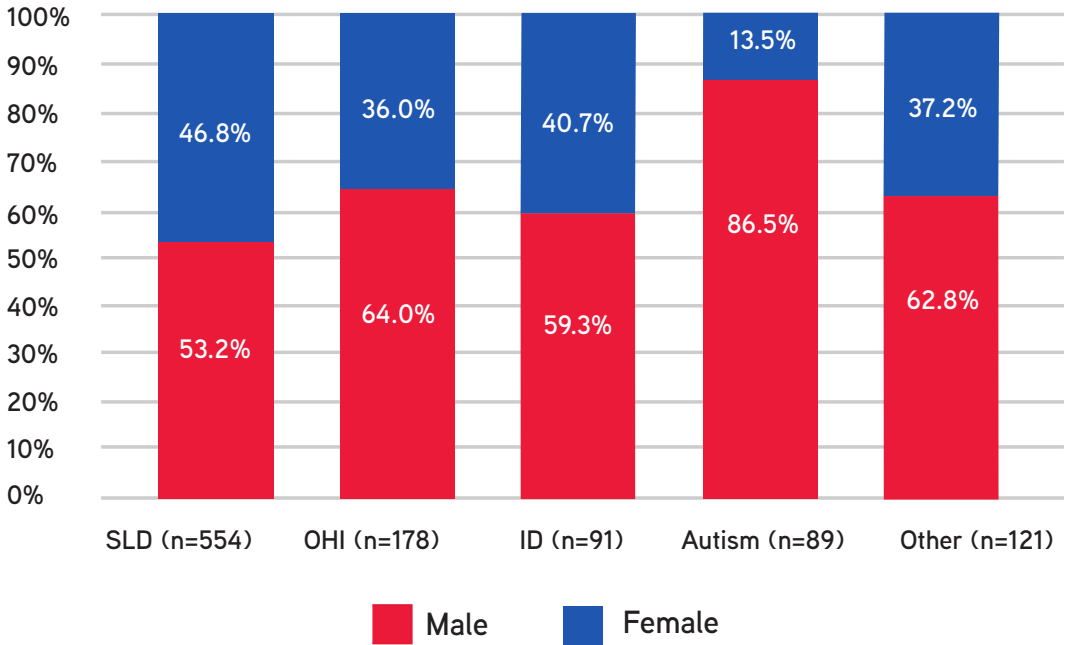
n = 11,558



Specific to the 2019 COHORT, figure four describes the gender and disability reported for exiters. The 2019 COHORT exiters were not significantly different from exiters in the 2010-2019 OLTS SAMPLE. Female exiters (59.6% ) were underrepresented in the COHORT in comparison to male (40.4%) exiters. Females are underrepresented across the disability categories referenced. The overall percentage of 2019 exiters across disability groups is consistent with data reported for the 2010-2019 OLTS SAMPLE with slightly higher representations across exiters with autism (8.6%) and lower representation of exiters with ID (8.8%).

**Figure 4: OLTS 2019 Exiters Demographics: Gender and Disability**

n = 1,033



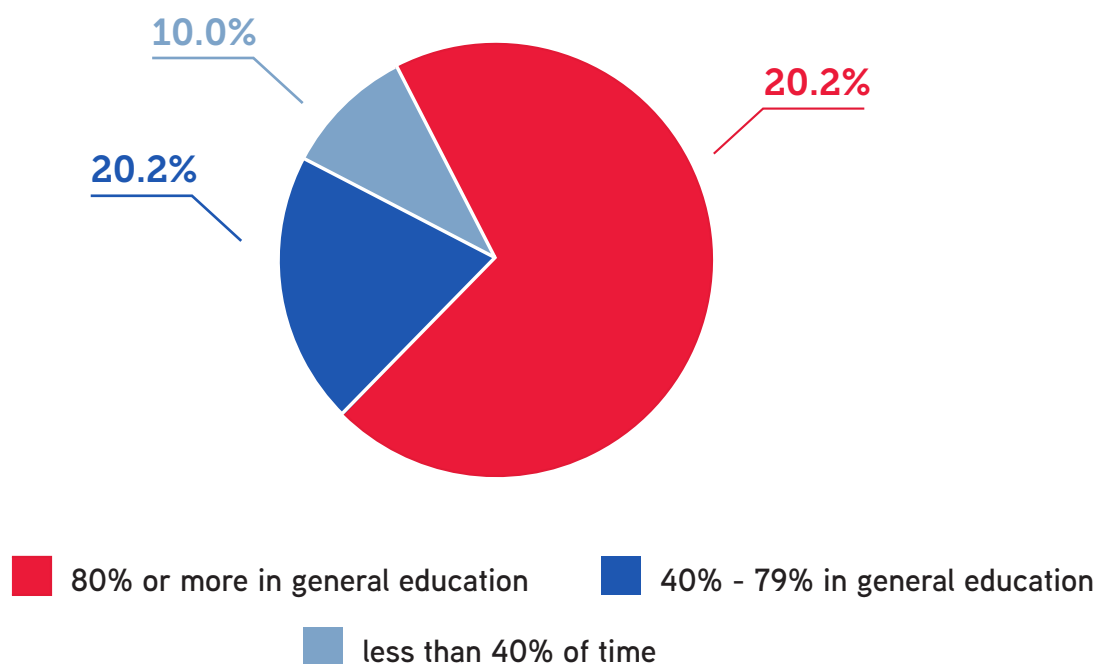
**Education and Transition Services**

The positive relationship between inclusion in the general education setting and academic performance are well documented in the research (Hehir, Grindal, & Eidelman, 2012; Wagner, Kutash, Duchnowski, & Epstein, 2005). Students who spend more time in general education classrooms fare better academically (Kleinert et al., 2015). Coursework associated with the general education curriculum more closely aligns with the necessary requirements for enrollment in colleges and universities.

Findings also suggest that students with disabilities who spend the majority of their school day in general education settings with non-disabled peers are also more likely to attend postsecondary education and be competitively employed after exiting high school (Baer et al., 2016; Mazzotti, Rowe, et al., 2020; Test, Mazzotti, et al., 2009; Wehman et al., 2015). Figure five suggests the majority of SAMPLE exiters (69.8%) received special education services within the general education environment.

**Figure 5 : 2010 - 2019 Exiters and Time In General Education Classrooms**

n = 11,012



This represents a small, but steadily increasing percentage of students receiving services within the general education environment in comparison to OLTS results reported in 2017 (65%) and 2019 (66%). Although these findings might be encouraging, it is important to remember approximately 71% of the exiters represent students with specific learning disabilities (55.8%) and other health impairments (15.3%) who often require intermittent or less intensive supports when compared to potential adaptations needed for students with intellectual disabilities.

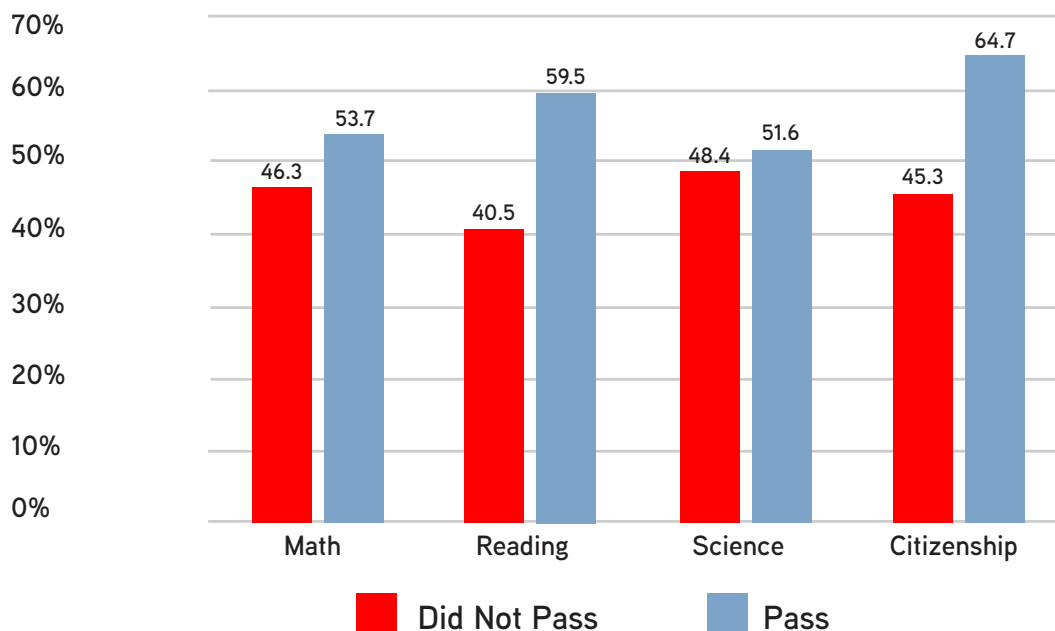
## End of Course Exams

In Ohio, students who graduated in the class of 2019 had three ways to demonstrate competency as part of graduation requirements including earning: a) 18 out of 35 points on seven end-of-course tests; b) an industry-recognized credential or group of credentials totaling 12 points and earn the required score on the WorkKeys test; and c) remediation-free scores in math and English language arts on the ACT or SAT. The students also had to obtain a state minimum of 20 credits in specific subjects. Although students have options for satisfying graduation requirements, preparation for meeting end-of-course exams continue to be an important consideration in planning for students' educational programming.

Most SAMPLE exiters (87.4%) participated in state tests or end of course exams. A limited number of exiters (12.6%) completed the alternate assessment for students with significant disabilities. Figure six provides information related to SAMPLE exiters' experiences with required state tests. Results indicate passage rates for state tests ranging from 51.6% for science to a high of 61.7% in citizenship with a majority of exiters successfully passing their end-of-course exams. There is strong evidence indicating successfully passing end-of-course or exit exams increases the likelihood of postschool employment (Mazzotti, Rowe, et al., 2020).

**Figure 6: OLTS Exiters Participating in End of Course Assessment 2010 - 2019**

n = 11,558



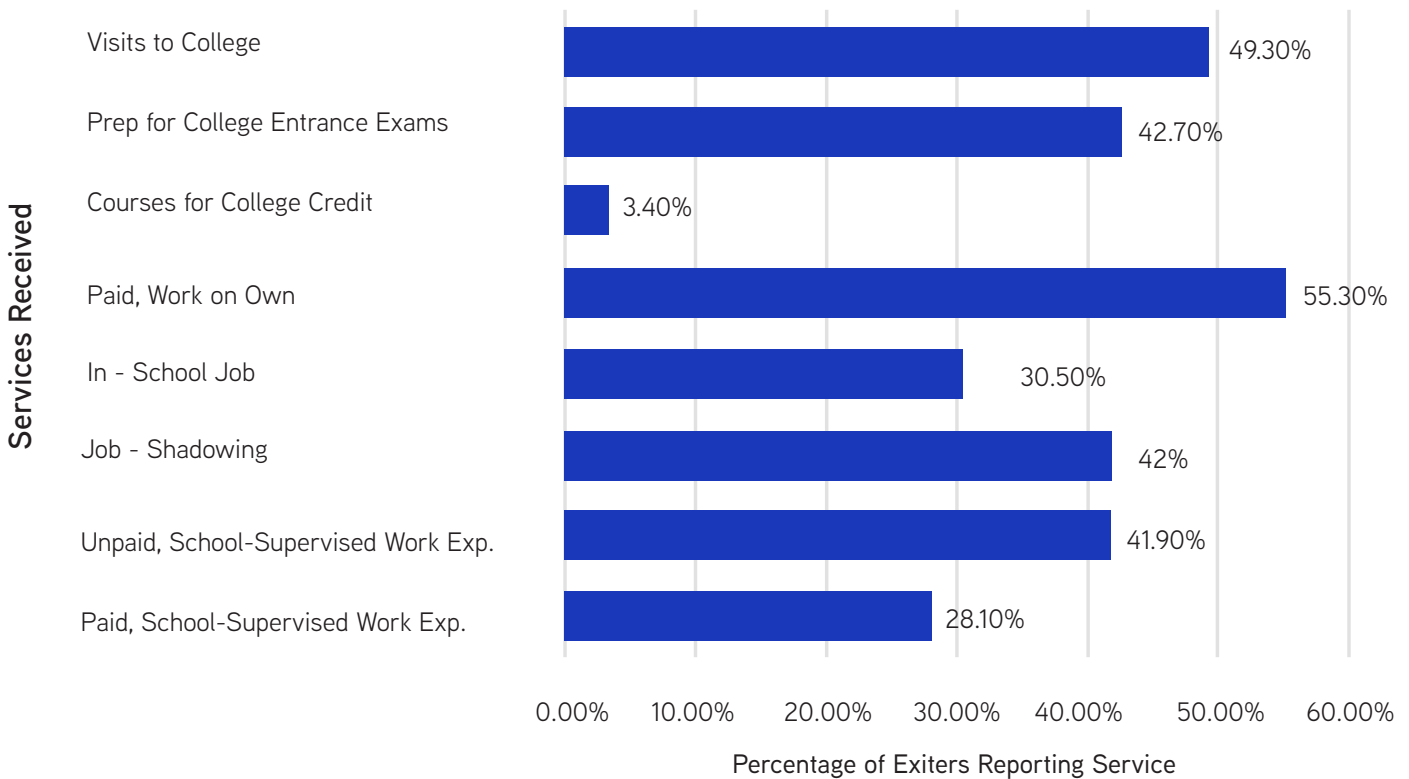
### Participation in Career-Technical Education (CTE).

The participation of students with disabilities in career and technical education has been associated with the likelihood of paid employment after graduation (Mazzotti et al., 2009; Wagner et al., 2015). Although, specific descriptions as to what CTE program participation means for students across disability populations served through special education are lacking (Haber et al., 2016). Almost two-thirds of OLTS SAMPLE exiters (62.4%) indicated they had taken a class in career tech. Approximately 75% of these students reported to have completed at least four semesters of coursework in the same career pathway.

### Transition Services Received.

Exiters in the OLTS SAMPLE reported participating in a variety of transition services while in school. The most prevalent services identified were paid work that they accessed on their own while in-school (55.3%) and visiting colleges (49.3%). It is probable these findings could be reflective of the fact that 55.8% of the SAMPLE identified as exiters with specific learning disabilities (SLD). Across all categories of transition services, courses for college credit (3.4%) and paid, supervised work experience while in school (28.10%) had lower participation rates than other transition services.

**Figure 7: OLTS 2010-2019 Exiters Transition Services Experienced**



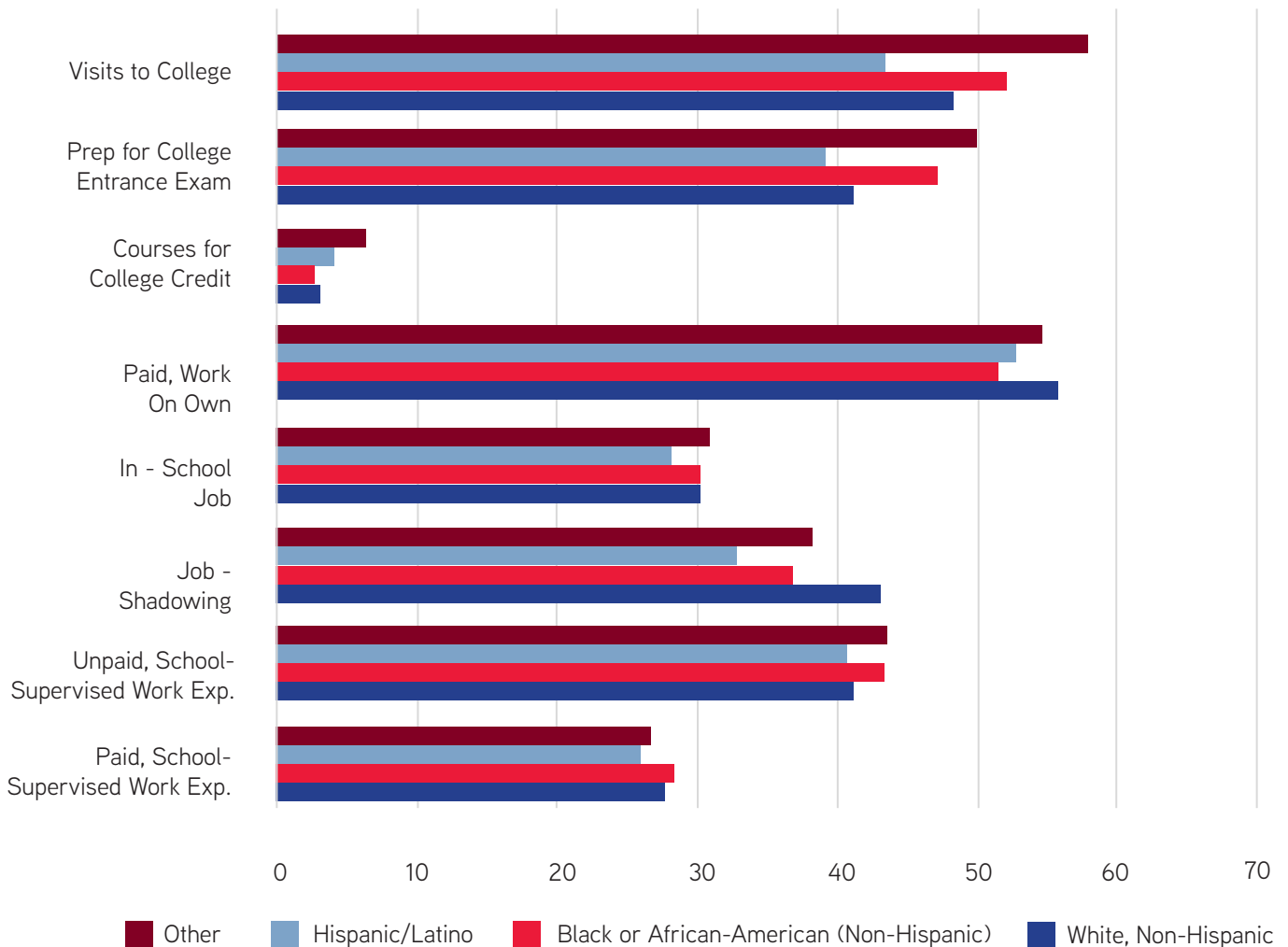
### Gender and Transition Services.

Female students in the OLTS SAMPLE were 20% less likely to report they had paid work experiences while in school (i.e., school supervised paid community work experience or paid work on their own) than their male peers. Female students were also 1.1 times more likely to have unpaid work experience (i.e., school supervised community work experience, job shadowing, or in-school job) than their male peers. Female students were 1.4 times more likely to have college preparatory experiences (i.e., courses for college credit, preparing for college entrance exams, or visits to college) than their male peers.

### Ethnicity and Transition Services.

OLTS SAMPLE Exiters who identified as Black or African American were 1.3 times more likely to have college preparatory experiences (i.e., courses for college credit, preparing for college entrance exams, or visits to college) than their peers who are White, non-Hispanic (see e.g., Figure 8).

**Figure 8: OLTS 2010-2019 Exiters Transition Services Experienced Across Ethnicity Group**



### Disability and Transition Services.

Compared to exiters with SLD, students with other disabilities were less likely to have paid work experience while in school. For example, students with autism, ID, and other health impairment were 60%, 40%, and 20% less likely to have paid work experience while in school, respectively. OLTS students with ID were 1.5 times more likely to have unpaid work experience than peers with SLD. Significant differences were also noted in exiters' experiences in college preparatory experiences across identified disability groups of exiters. For instance, students with autism or ID were 30% and 70% less likely than students with SLD to have reported participating in college preparatory experiences during high school.

## IV. Ohio's Indicator 14 Post-School Outcomes and Engagement Rates

The Indicator 14 post-school outcomes and engagement rates for 2019 COHORT exiters and SAMPLE exiters are reflected in Tables 1 and 2, respectively. Descriptions for each category are contained in section one of this report. When viewing the results for exiters in the 2019 COHORT, it is important to note the potential impact of COVID-19 for individuals and post-school services. Table one suggests a high engagement rate (84.74%) for the 1,048 exiters surveyed. The engagement rate is slightly higher than the rate for the aggregated OLTS SAMPLE (see Table 2).

**Table 1 : Ohio's Post-School Engagement 2019 Exiters**

Percent of youth who are no longer in secondary school, had IEPs in effect at the time they left school, and were:	Number	Percentage
A. Enrolled in higher education within one year of leaving high school.	311	29.7
B. Enrolled in higher education or competitively employed within one year of leaving high school.	828	79.0
C. Enrolled in higher education or in some other postsecondary education or training program; or competitively employed or in some other employment within one year of leaving high school.	905	86.4
Total Exiters:	1,048	

Note: Cumulative counts and percentages are represented in Categories A, B, and C, respectively. The total number of 2019 exiters engaged was 905 and the engagement rate was 86.4%.



**Table 2: Ohio’s Post-School Engagement Rates  
2010-2019 Exiters**

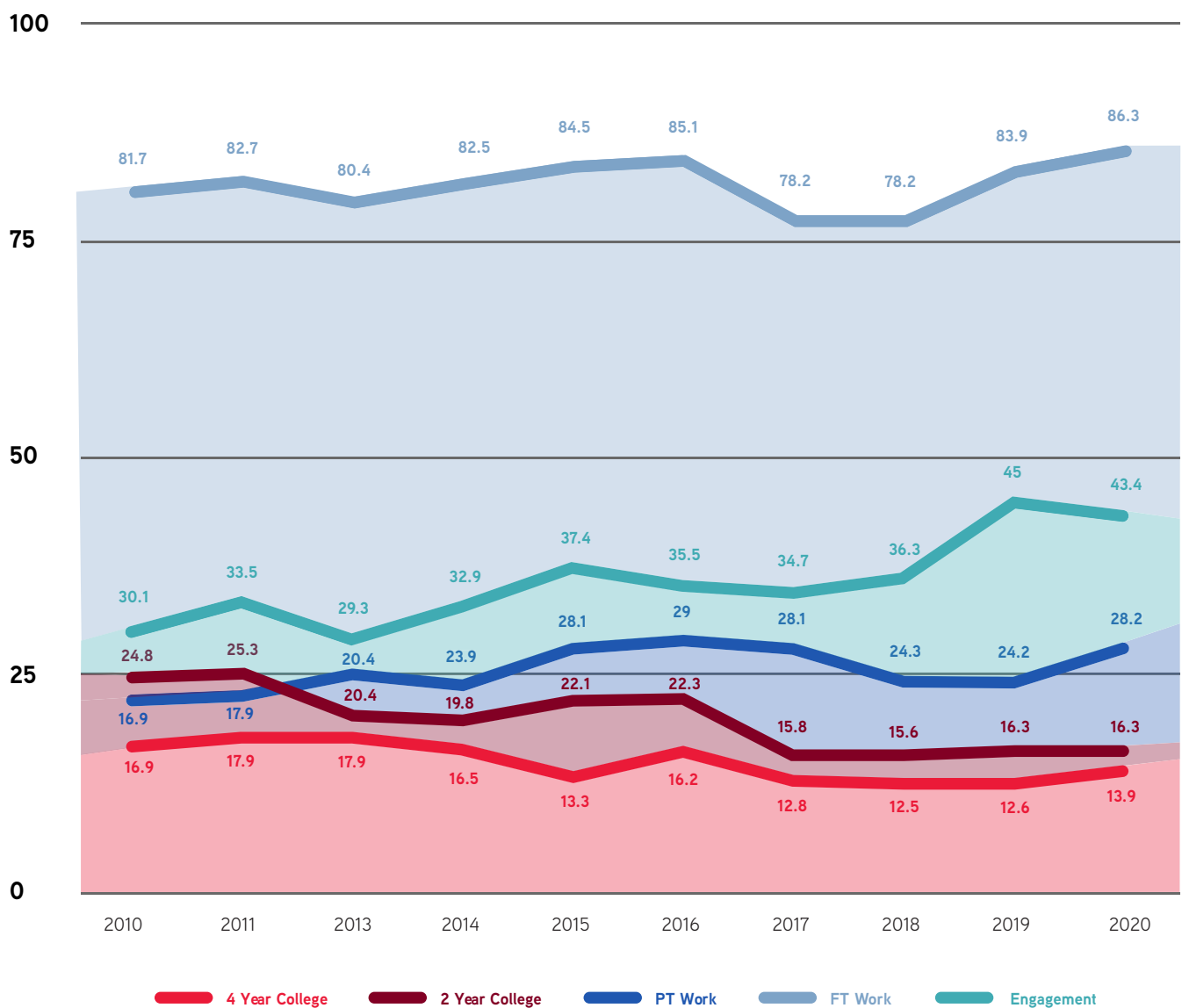
Percent of youth who are no longer in secondary school, had IEPs in effect at the time they left school,	Number	Percentage
A. Enrolled in higher education within one year of leaving high school.	4006	34.6
B. Enrolled in higher education or competitively employed within one year of leaving high school.	8734	75.4
C. Enrolled in higher education or in some other postsecondary education or training program; or competitively employed or in some other employment within one year of leaving high school.	9527	82.2
Total Exiters:	11,591	

Note: Cumulative counts and percentages are represented across Categories A, B, and C, respectively. The total number of SAMPLE exiters engaged was 9,527 and the engagement rate was 82.2%.



Figure nine contains annual data across the past decade related to post-secondary education and employment categories used in determining engagement rates. Engagement rates for 2019 COHORT exiters were the same or higher for all post-school outcome areas except with full-time employment. Although, 2019 exiters reported higher engagement with full-time employment across all study years except 2018.

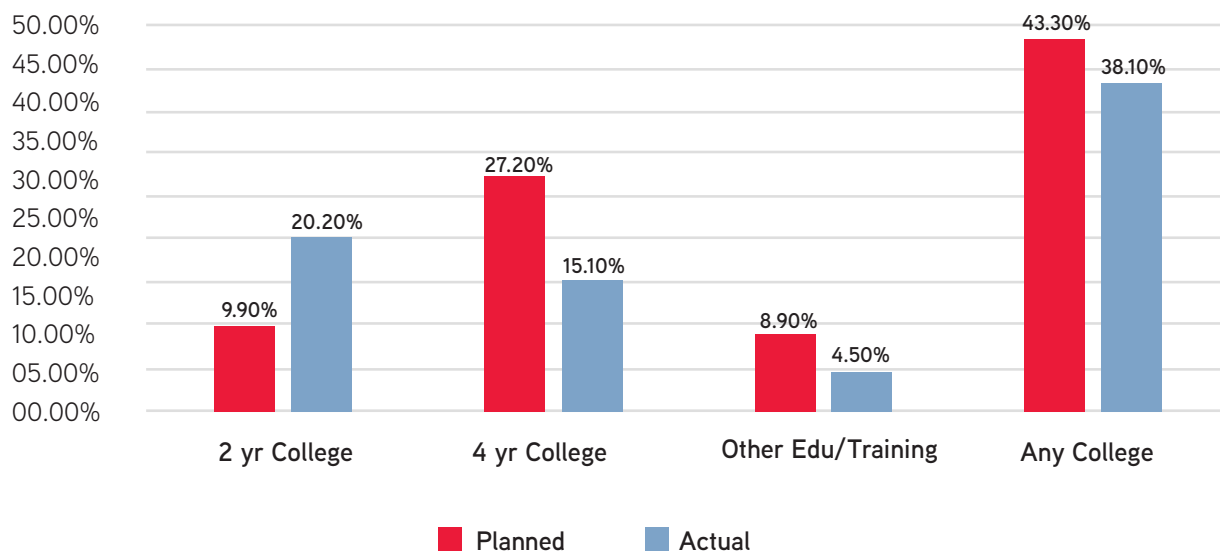
**Figure 9: Trends in Post-School Outcomes**  
**OLTS Postschool Engagement Group by Year of Exit**  
 n = 11,558 Exiters



# V. Transition to Postsecondary Education

Increasingly, students with disabilities, including those with ID and autism, are communicating their desires to go to college as well as actively enrolling in a variety of postsecondary education opportunities. Results from OLTS SAMPLE exiters support the trend of increasing expectations for postsecondary education as 43% of the exiters planned to further their formal education after leaving high school. Yet, respondents' intention to enroll in postsecondary education were higher than the percentage of respondents who actually enrolled (38.10%) across most postsecondary education opportunities (See Figure 10). The percentage of OLTS exiters who enrolled in a 2- or 4-year college (35.30%) is less than the national enrollment rates reported in 2020 for peers without disabilities (62.7%; BLS, 2021). Overall, more OLTS SAMPLE exiters enrolled in two-year colleges than had communicated an intention to enroll when they left secondary school. The postsecondary options listed in the table align with the operational definition for engagement referenced in Section I of this report. Differences in students' plans for postsecondary education and actual enrollment based on gender, ethnicity, and disability were also noted.

**Figure 10: OLTS 2010-2019 Exiters Planned Versus Actual Participation in Postsecondary Education and Related Training**

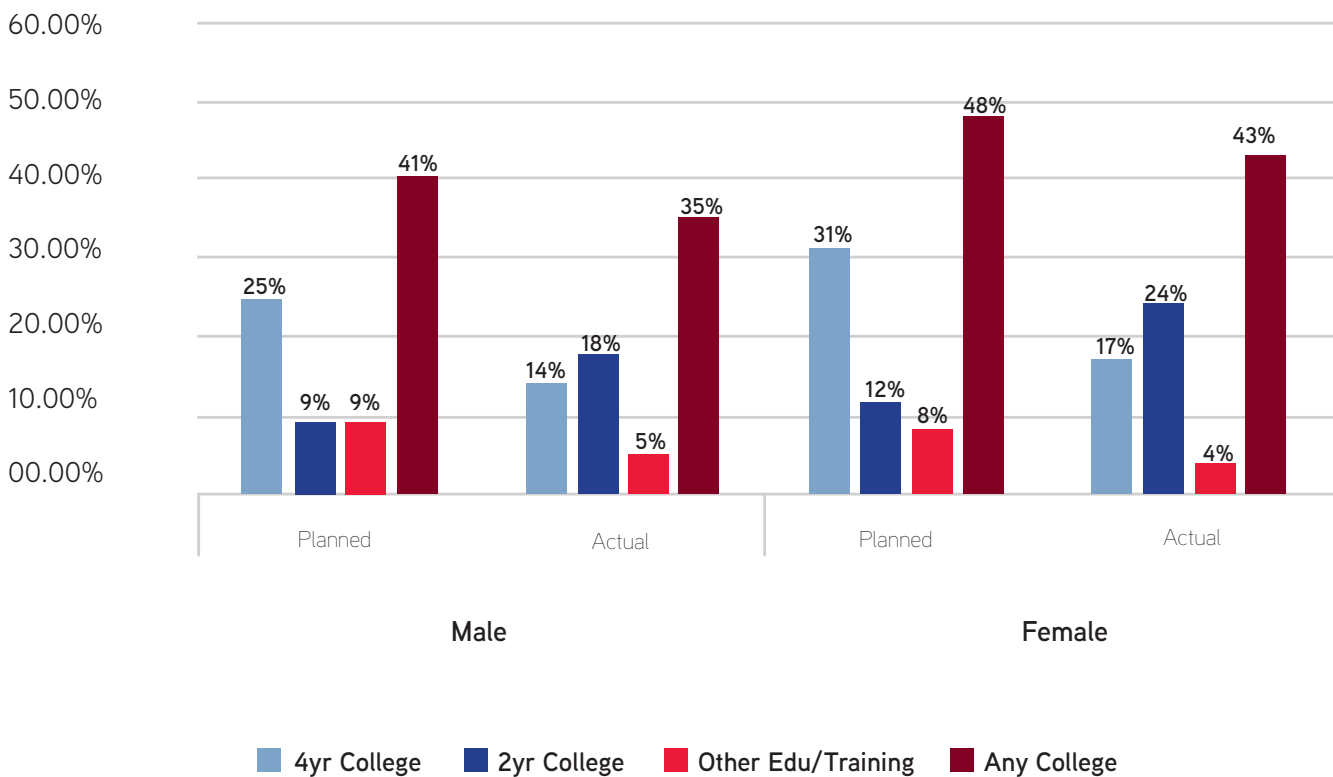


### Gender and Postsecondary Education Engagement.

Findings related to gender and planned versus actual participation in postsecondary education are consistent with the overall findings for the OLTS SAMPLE. More female students planned to (48%) and attended (43%) any type of postsecondary education when compared to their male peers (see Figure 11). Female exiters were also 1.7 times more likely to be enrolled in higher education within one year of leaving high school than their male peers.

**Figure 11: OLTS 2010-2019 Exiters Planned and Actual Participation in Postsecondary Education and Training by Gender**

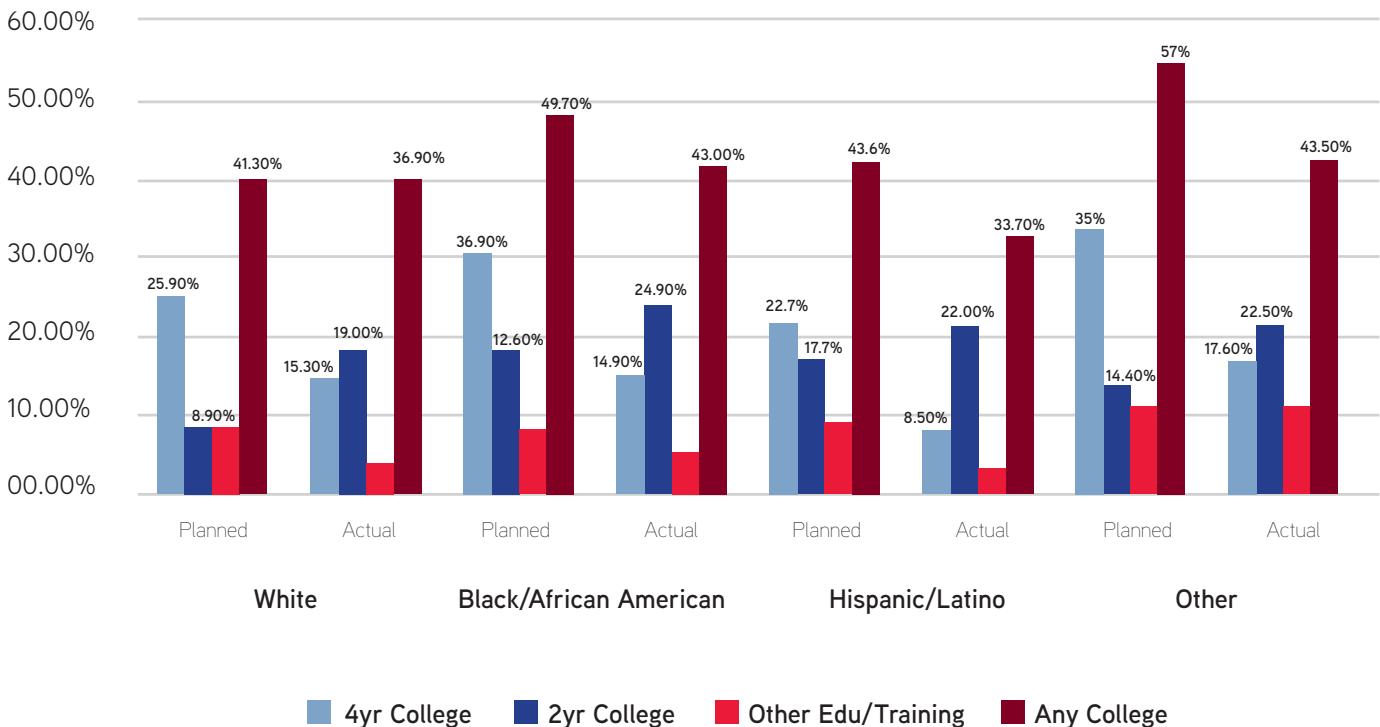
n = 11,558 Exiters



### Ethnicity and Postsecondary Education Engagement.

Across OLTS ethnicity groups, all non-White groups reported higher overall expectations for continuing their education after they left school (see Figure 12). OLTS SAMPLE respondents who were Black or African American were 1.3 times more likely to be enrolled in 2- and 4- year colleges and universities within one year of leaving high school than their peers whose ethnicity are White. Similarly, exiters identified as other ethnicity groups were also 1.3 times more likely to be enrolled in 2- or 4-year colleges within one year of leaving high school than their peers who are White. Although Hispanic/Latino exiters were not significantly different than peers whose ethnicity are White in terms of the likelihood of attending college within one year of leaving high school.

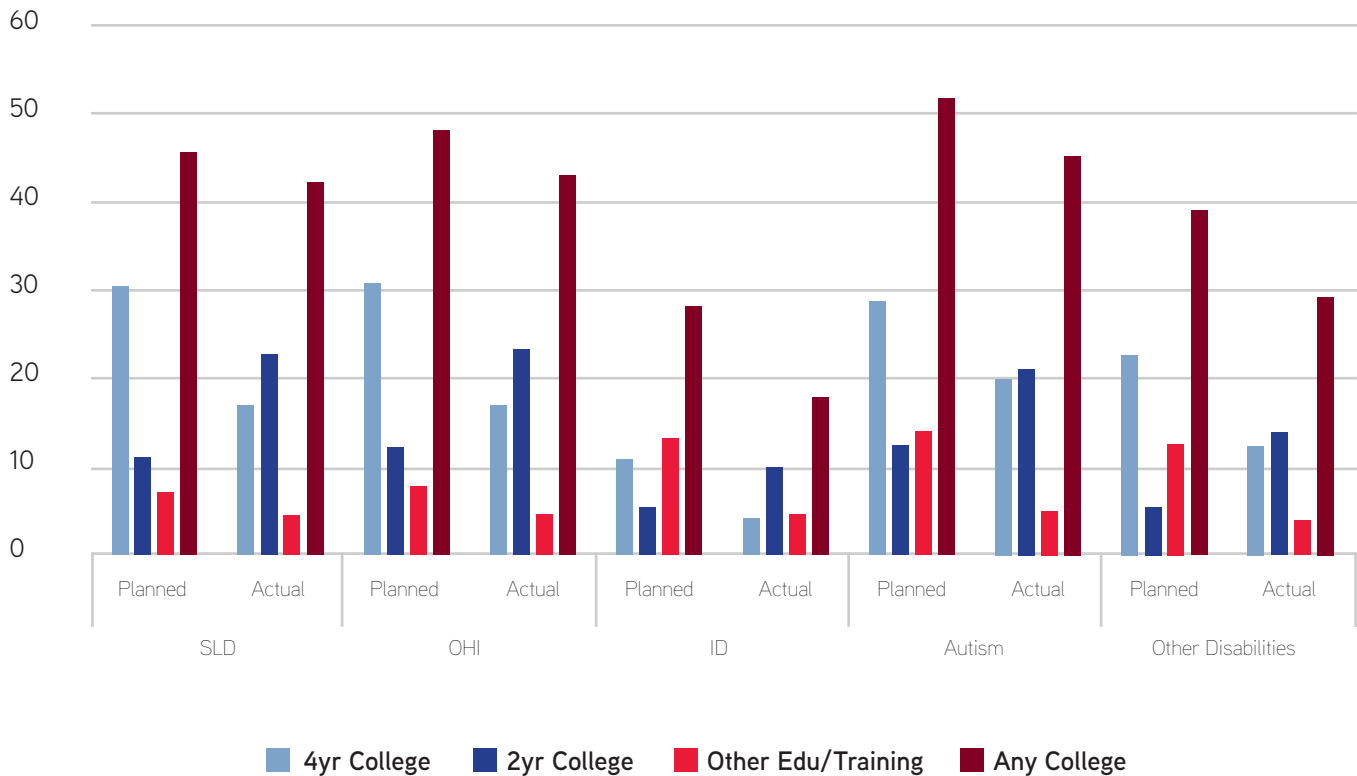
**Figure 12: OLTS 2010-2019 Exiters Planned and Actual Participation in Postsecondary Education and Training by Ethnicity**



### Disabilities and Postsecondary Education Engagement.

The planned and actual participation in any postsecondary education after students left high school was higher for exiters with SLD (45.4%/42%), OHI (47.9%/42.7%), and autism (51.4%/45%) are consistent with the overall findings for the OLTS SAMPLE (see Figure 13). Compared to OLTS exiters with SLD, exiters with autism were 1.6 times more likely to be enrolled in postsecondary education within one year of leaving high school. However, individuals with intellectual disability were 60% less likely to be enrolled in postsecondary education within one year of leaving high school. Students with OHI and other disabilities were not significantly different in terms of their likelihood for enrolling in postsecondary education within one year of leaving high school.

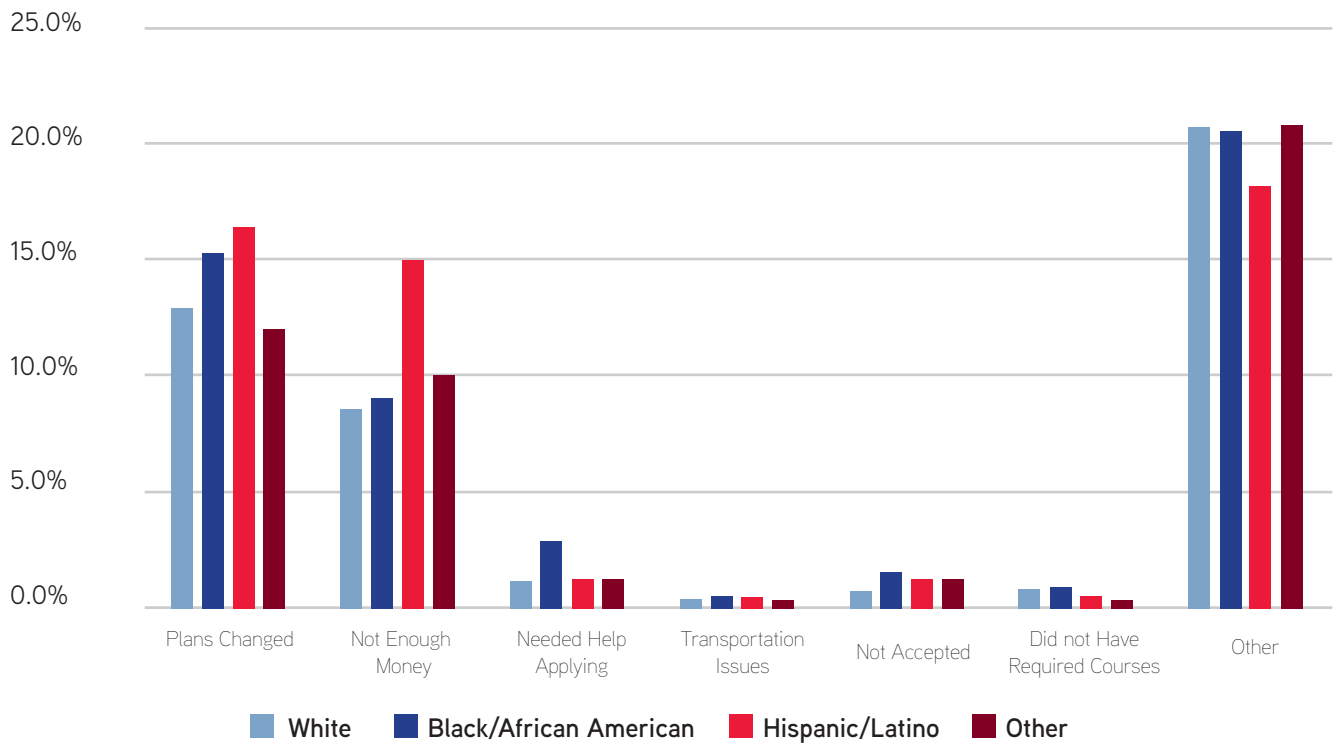
**Figure 13: OLTS 2010-2019 Exiters Planned and Actual Participation in Postsecondary Education and Training by Disability**



### Reasons For Exiters Not Participating in Postsecondary Education.

There were a variety of reasons OLTS SAMPLE exiters provided for why they did not continue their education after leaving high school as they had planned to do (See Figure 14). These reasons differed across characteristics of gender, ethnicity, and disability. Female students were significantly more likely to report they did not go on to postsecondary education as planned because of not having enough money. Black or African American students were significantly more likely to report their plans had changed, that they needed help when applying, or being not accepted. Hispanic/Latino students were more likely to report not having enough money to go on to postsecondary education. Although, across ethnicity categories used in the analysis, exiters “other” reasons for not going on to postsecondary education represented the highest percentage of responses. Some of the “other” reasons exiters provided included they were delaying enrollment, working full- or part-time, and providing care giving to family members. Students with SLD were more likely to report that they did not go on to postsecondary education as planned because of changed plans, or not having enough money.

**Figure 14: OLTS 2010-2019 Exiters Reasons for Not Participating in Postsecondary Education by Ethnicity**

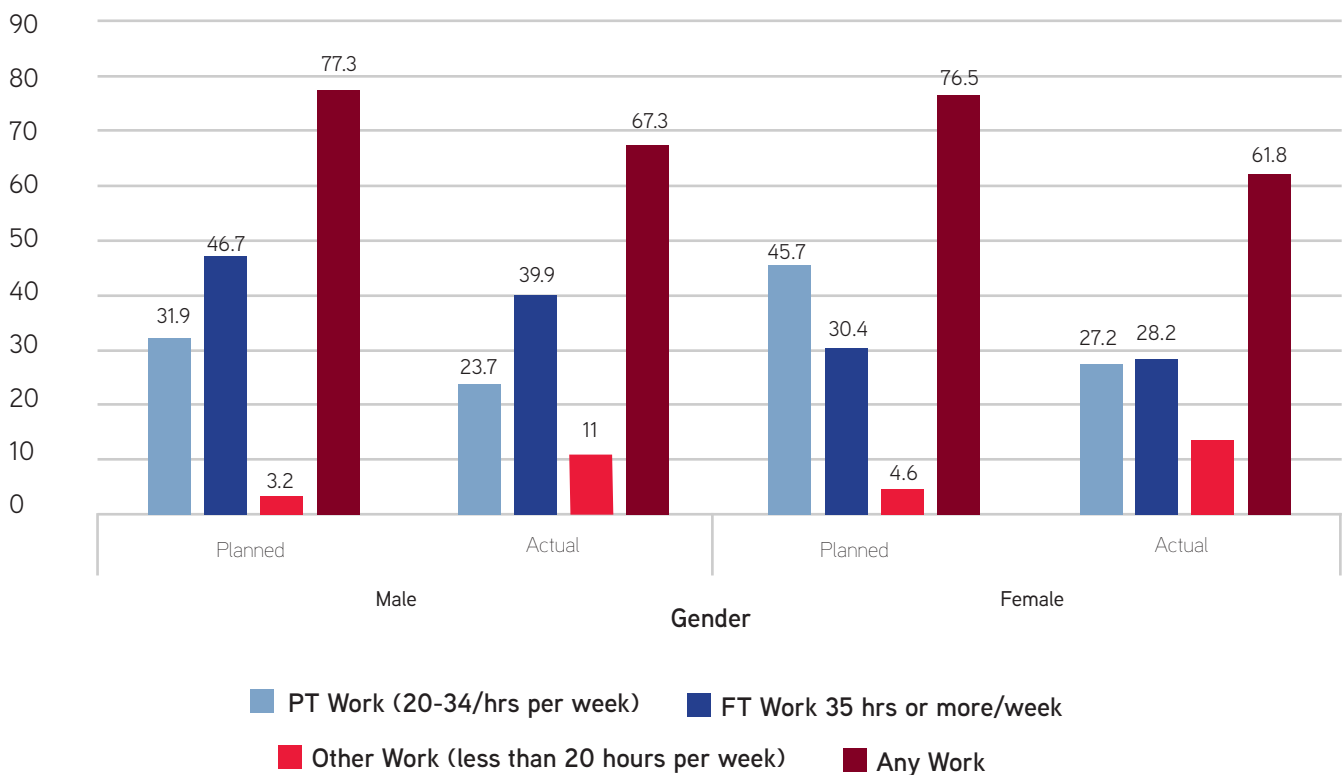


## VI. Transition to Employment

Characteristics of students and educational programming, such as time spent in general education classes and completion of career and technical education coursework, have been linked to better employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities (Mazzotti et al., 2009). OLTS SAMPLE exiters who took career and technical education classes for three semesters or more were more likely to be competitively employed within one year of leaving high school than their peers who took these classes for less than three semesters.

OLTS SAMPLE Exiters' intentions to work full- or part-time after graduation were higher than what they actually did after exiting school (see e.g., Figure 15). The Indicator 14 employment categories represent full- and part-time employment categories on Figure 15 and are defined in Section I of this report.

**Figure 15: OLTS 2010-2019 Exiters Planned Versus Actual Participation in Postsecondary Employment & Other Vocational Activity by Gender**



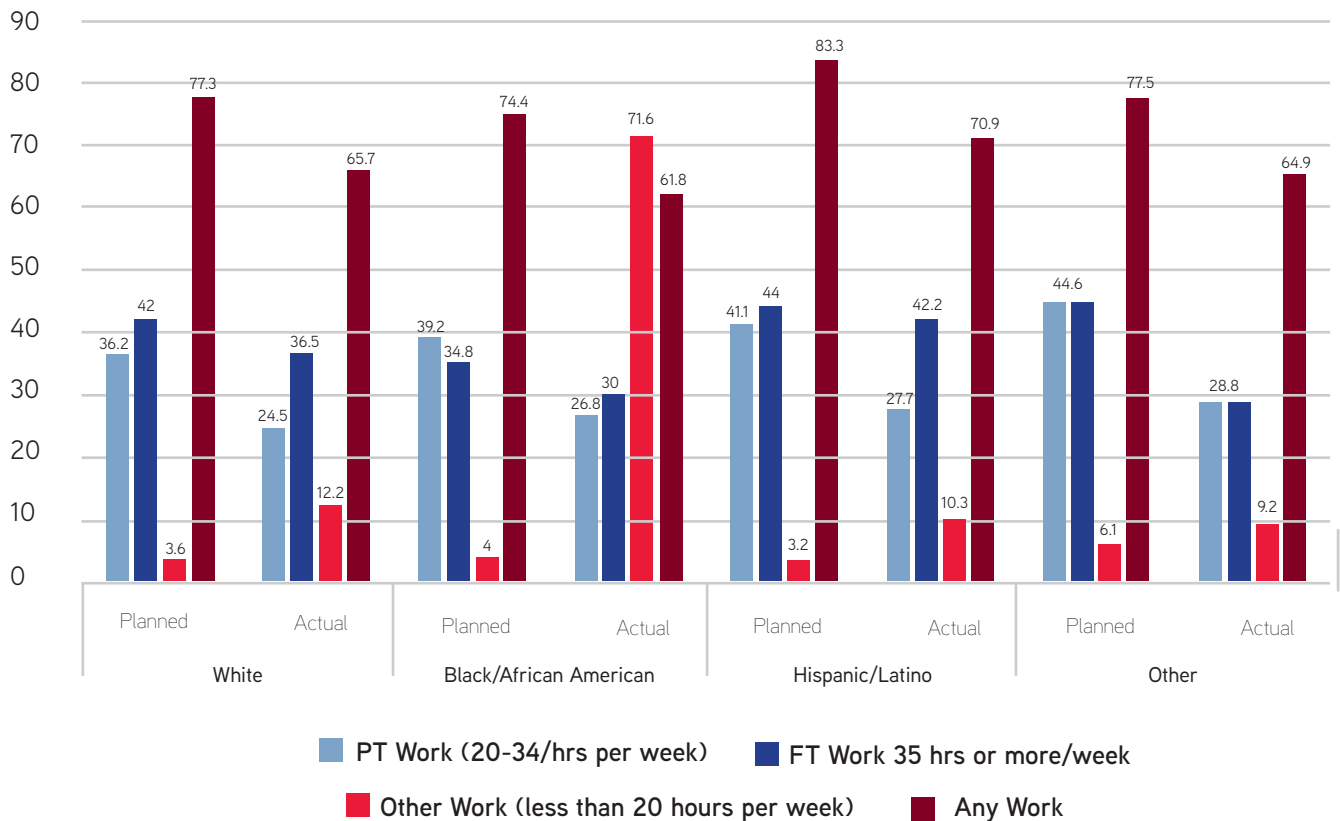
### Gender and Employment.

The overall participation in employment or vocational activity during the year after they left school for male and female exiters was 67.3% and 61.8%, respectively. However, only SAMPLE exiters working 20 or more hours per work in integrated settings count towards engaged in employment for Indicator 14 reporting. Although over the past decade, female exiters were 40% less likely to be competitively employed within one year of leaving high school when compared to their male peers.

### Ethnicity and Employment.

Exiters working full- or part-time who identified as Hispanic/Latino (69.9%) reported the highest level of engagement in employment, followed by exiters who identified as White (61%), other (57.6%) and Black or African American (56.8%). Black or African American exiters were 20% less likely to be competitively employed within one year of leaving high school than their White peers. Similarly, OLTS exiters from the racial group labeled other were also 20% less likely to be competitively employed than their White OLTS peers. The likelihood of Hispanic/Latino exiters to be competitively employed after exiting school were not significantly different than peers who were White.

**Figure 16: OLTS 2010-2019 Exiters Planned Versus Actual Participation in Postsecondary Employment & Other Vocational Activity by Ethnicity**

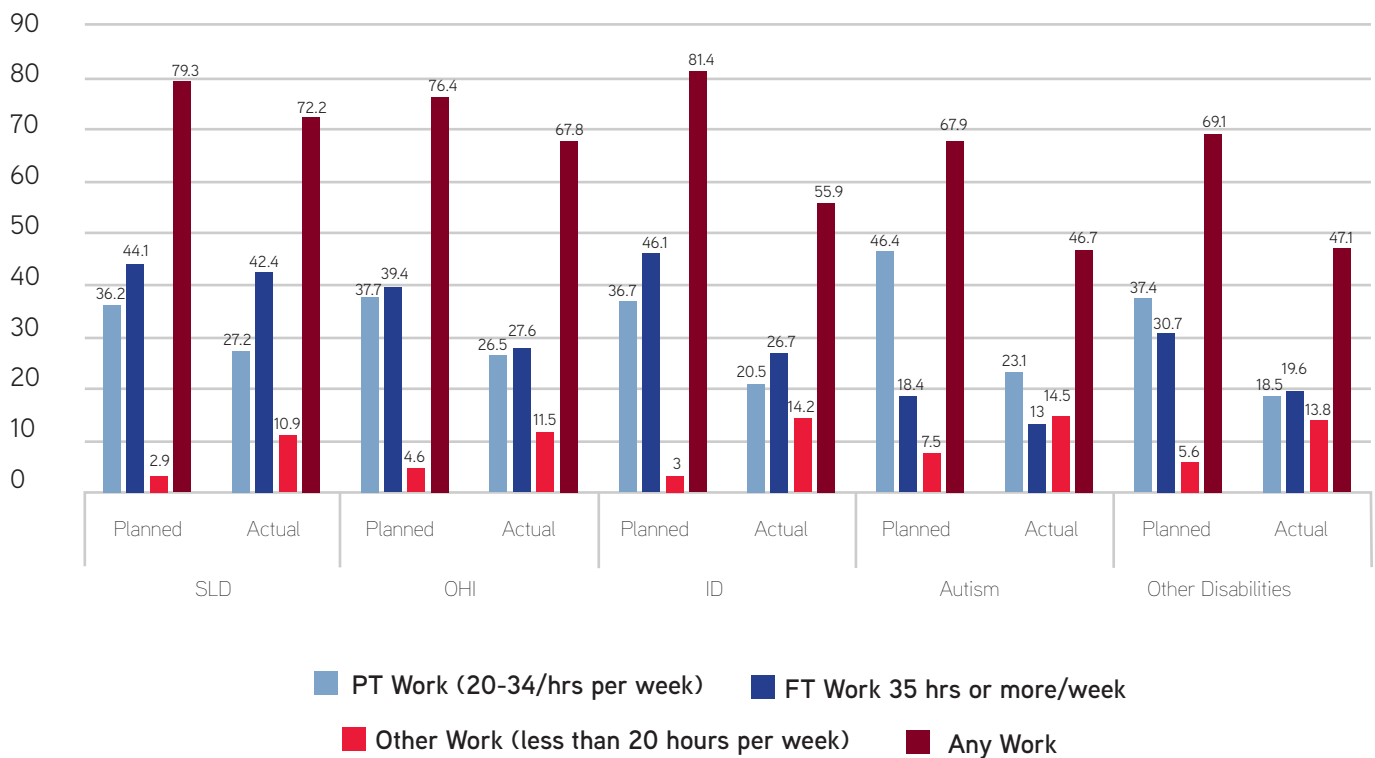




## Disability and Employment.

More OLTS SAMPLE exiters across all disability groups planned to work competitively than were engaged in competitive employment. The highest percentage of exiters working 20 or more hours per week were individuals with SLD (69.6%), OHI (53.9%), and ID (47.6%). Exiters with autism, other health impairment, and other disabilities were 60%, 10%, and 30% less likely to be competitively employed within the year since exiting school than students with SLD, respectively. However, OLTS exiters with ID were 1.4 times more likely to be competitively employed than peers with SLD, within one year of leaving high school.

**Figure 17: OLTS 2010-2019 Exiters Planned Versus Actual Participation in Postsecondary Employment & Other Vocational Activity by Disability**



### Exiter Pay and Workplace Integration.

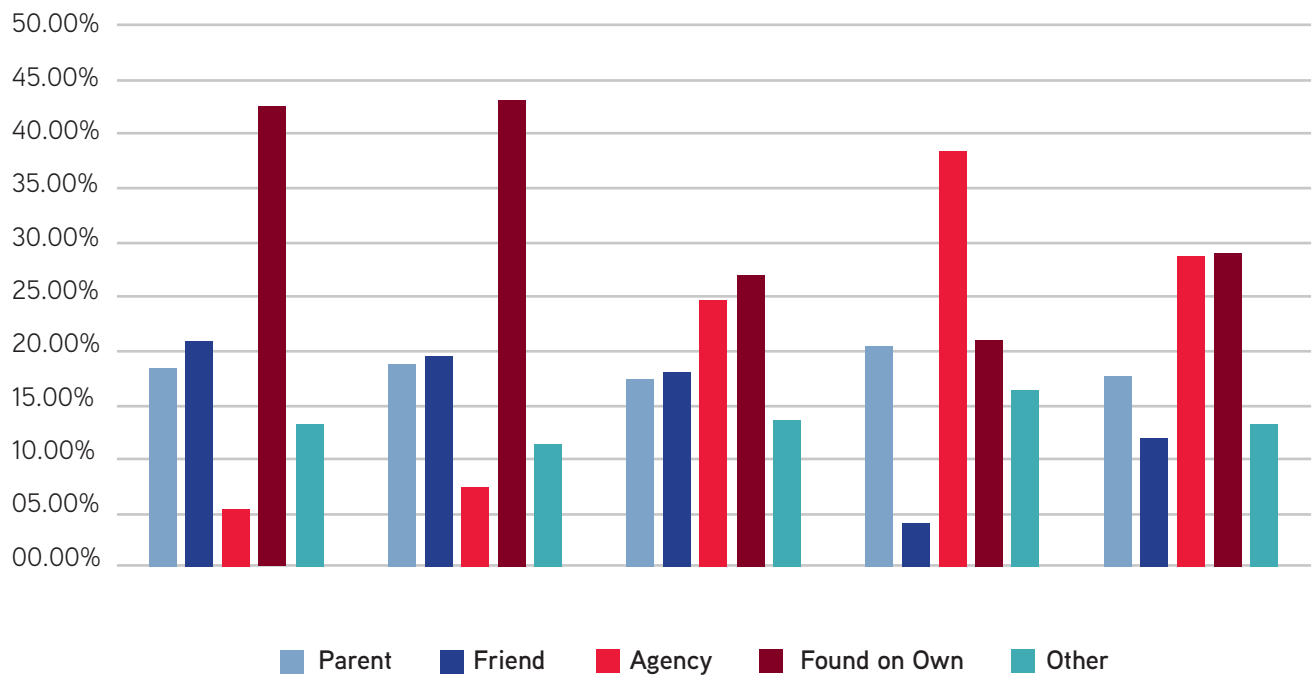
Employed exiters also reported being paid, and receiving the same benefits, as coworkers, 85% and 80.8%, respectively. Exiters also believed they were integrated into the workplace, engaging with coworkers without disabilities to get the job done (94.1%) and interacting more than half of the time (26.3%) or always (56.1%) with coworkers.

### How Exiters Found Employment After Leaving School.

For exiters who reported having worked for pay during the year following high school, more than two-thirds of exiters communicated they had chosen their own job (68.6%). More than one-third (38.6%) of working exiters reported finding employment on their own.

Working exiters with autism were less likely to report finding employment on their own when compared to employed exiters with other disabilities (see Figure 18). Exiters with autism identified agency (38.3%) and family (20.4%) supports as more prevalent sources of assistance in securing employment. Overall, working exiters reported limited agency support (11.4%) in finding employment with higher agency assistance reported across exiters with ID (24.6%), autism (38.3%), and other disability categories (28.6%), which represents exiters with low-incidence disabilities and often individuals with more complex support needs.

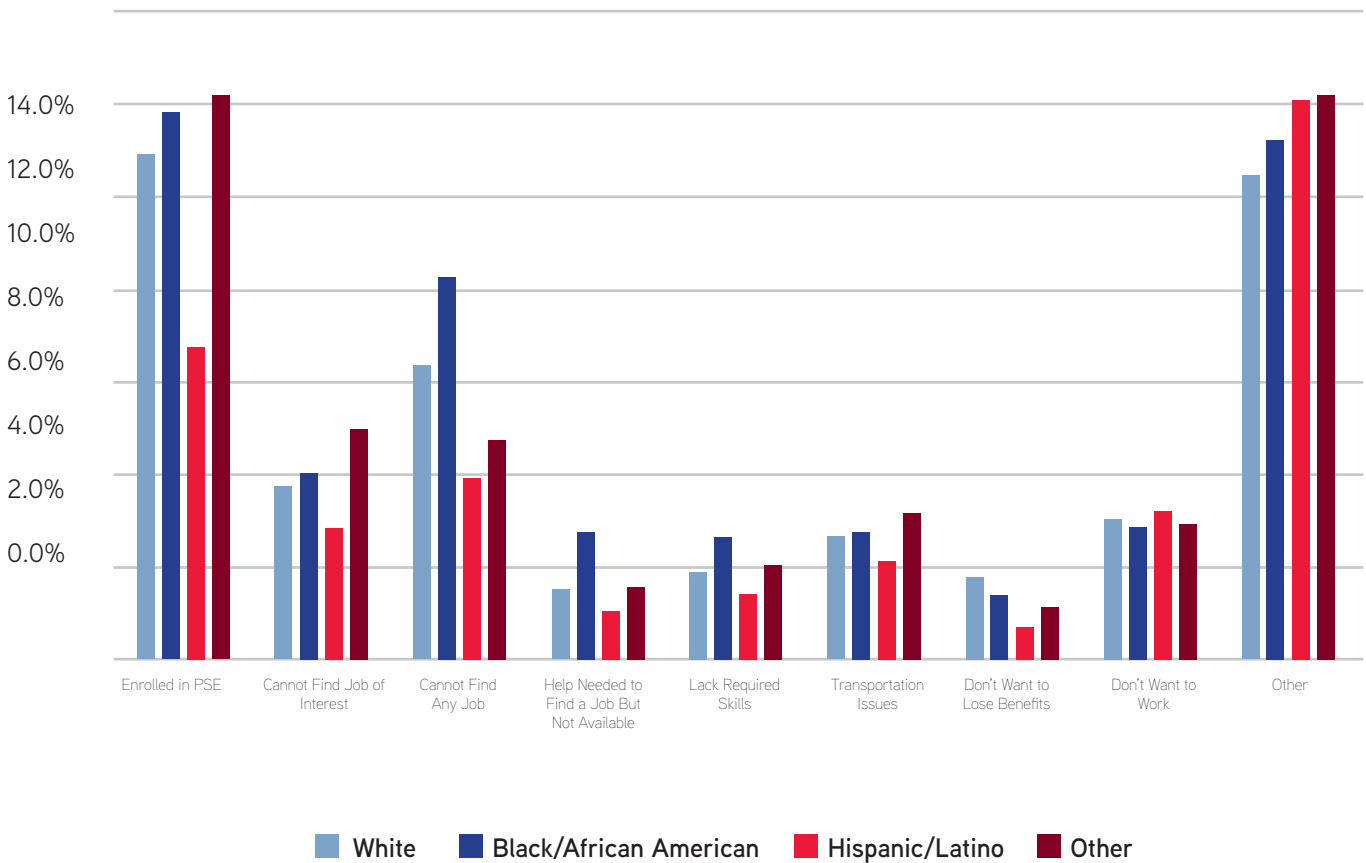
**Figure 18: OLTS 2010-2019 Exiter Source of Assistance in Finding Employment by Disability**



### Reasons for Exitters Not Participating in Postsecondary Employment.

Female exitters were significantly more likely than males to suggest enrollment in postsecondary education, transportation problems, and potential loss of public benefits as reasons for not working. Black or African American exitters were more likely to report they did not go on to join the workforce because they were not able to find any job, or they needed assistance in finding a job and none was available (see Figure 19). Exitters with autism or ID identified multiple reasons for not working after exiting school. They were significantly more likely than OLTS peers with other disabilities to report: not being able to find a job that fits their interest; not being able to find any job; needing assistance with finding a job but none was available; lack of required skills; transportation problems; not wanting to lose their benefits; or not wanting to work. In contrast, significantly fewer OLTS exitters with SLD reported these reasons as factors for not working.

**Figure 19: OLTS 2010-2019 Exitters Reasons for Not Working by Ethnicity**



### CTE Semesters and Employment.

Students who took career and technical education classes for three semesters or more were 1.7 times more likely to be competitively employed within one year of leaving high school than their peers who took these classes for less than three semesters.

## VII. Discussion

For OLTS 2019 COHORT exiters, the overall engagement rate (86.3%) was the highest reported for any year during the last decade. Engagement rates were the same or higher for OLTS 2019 COHORT exiters across the outcome areas of part-time work and participation in 2- or 4- year colleges when compared to reported rates for 2018 exiters. Although, college enrollment is the same or higher for 2019 COHORT exiters in comparison to 2018 exiters, the percentage of COHORT exiters accessing college remains lower than engagement rates reported across the first four years of the 10-year reporting period as well as nationally reported college enrollment for the same year (BLS, 2021).

**Key Finding #1:** Over the recent decade, the highest engagement rate (86.3%) was reported by exiters from the 2019 OLTS cohort.

**Key Finding #2:** The percentage of 2019 OLTS exiters accessing college is consistent with rates reported for previous OLTS exiters but is lower than national college enrollment rates reported for the same year (BLS, 2021).

Only about one-third of OLTS SAMPLE exiters acknowledged plans to enroll in postsecondary education but fewer exiters actually enrolled. More Ohio students with disabilities enrolled in two-year colleges than four-year colleges, consistent with findings from the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (Newman et al., 2011). Although overall enrollment in higher education is low for OLTS SAMPLE exiters in recent years, key findings related to demographic characteristics of exiters, such as ethnicity and disability are noted. For example, SAMPLE exiters who identified as Black or African American were 1.3 times more likely to enroll in 2- or 4-year colleges in comparison to peers whose ethnicity are White. Exiters across all non-White ethnicity groups reported higher participation in two-year colleges than exiters who identified as White. These are encouraging findings given that individuals with disabilities representing ethnically diverse populations have been underrepresented across students attending colleges and universities (NCES, 2019).

**Key Finding #3:** OLTS SAMPLE exiters who identified as Black or African American were 1.3 times more likely than their peers who identify as White to enroll in 2- or 4- year colleges.

Further exploration of barriers to accessing college and universities may also be warranted for students with disabilities representing racially and ethnically diverse populations. This is especially important given the positive relationship between attainment of higher education and employment. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (2012) reported that the unemployment rate of adults with disabilities with a bachelor's degree or higher was 9.1%, compared with 15% for those with some college, 14% for those with a high school diploma, and 20.8% for those with less than a high school diploma.

Many of OLTS SAMPLE exiters may have planned to attend a four-year college, given the discrepancy between results for planned to and enrolled (see e.g., Figure 12). The economic costs associated with enrolling in college as well as potential opportunity costs, such as time away from work or family, and other responsibilities all factor into one's decision to attend college. Hispanic or Latino exiters reported the lowest overall college participation rate, but also identified not having the money to pay for college as a barrier to enrollment and the lowest participation in transition services that might help them prepare for college such as college visits and preparation for college entrance exams.

With regard to OLTS SAMPLE exiter disability group, individuals with autism were 1.6 times more likely to be enrolled in 2- and 4-year colleges than exiters with SLD. Yet, they were 30% less likely to report having received college preparatory experiences while in high school when compared to students with SLD. This is an encouraging finding in that exiters with autism are enrolling in higher education programs. It would also be important for education and transition professionals, as well as parents or caregivers to support students with autism in developing a course of study and college preparatory experiences that prepares them for the transition to college. Self-determination skills such as time management, organizational skills, problem solving, and self-advocacy are likely needed by most college students but may not be explicitly taught in secondary general education academic classes. However, these skills have proven especially challenging for college students with autism (White et al., 2016).

**Key Finding #4:** OLTS SAMPLE exiters with autism were more likely to enroll in 2- and 4-year colleges than exiters with SLD. Yet, the participation in college preparatory experiences by exiters with autism was significantly less than the experiences reported by exiters with SLD.

In the outcome area of competitive integrated employment, Hispanic or Latino SAMPLE exiters reported the highest level of engagement in full- or part-time post-school employment (69.9%). It is also important to recognize that many exiters reported finding employment on their own. This may be viewed favorably but could also be representative of the high percentage of exiters with SLD and OHI in the sample and potentially speak to a disconnect between exiters, their families and employment service providers regardless of the exiters' disabilities.

**Key Finding #5: OLTS SAMPLE exiters who identified as Hispanic or Latino reported the highest post-school employment engagement rate, 69.9%.**

Decades of findings about the workplace experiences of individuals with disabilities and those individuals accessing employment services, communicate that job retention and career advancement have been areas of concern (Brooke et al., 2018; Newman et al., 2011). OLTS data suggests exiters may be successful in securing employment on their own or through their friend and family network. However, navigating workplace expectations and environments are often contingent on critical workplace skills such as problem solving, self-direction, and communication. Many adolescents and young adults with disabilities have struggled with these skills.

Given the overall low percentage of employed OLTS SAMPLE exiters who reported accessing agency supports to find employment, it would be important to investigate the reasons for the somewhat limited use of agency supports in finding employment. This information would be especially critical for transition professionals working with individuals and families representing disability populations who experience significant barriers to accessing and sustaining competitive integrated employment. It could be that access to services from agencies such as Opportunities for Ohioians with Disabilities, County Boards of Developmental Disabilities, and community rehabilitation programs are underreported in the OLTS SAMPLE. It is also plausible that exiters and their families are not identifying or connecting with agencies available to support them through the transition process and across the adult years.

**Key Finding #6: Agency supports (e.g., vocational rehabilitation or developmental disability services) to find employment were underutilized or not needed by OLTS SAMPLE Exiters.**

When reviewing this report, it is important to recognize the results reflect responses from students who were willing to participate as they were leaving school and that district representatives were able to identify and survey one year later. Demographic characteristics of OLTS exiters suggest low participation rates for individuals who are racially and ethnically diverse. Thus, results may not be representative of the experience and outcomes of the larger state population of students with IEPs exiting school.

